Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) role statement

Our HIV role statement lists the skills and knowledge of an APD working in the area of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). The statement was developed by members of the HIV Interest Group.

Knowledge

- Understands the role of medical nutrition therapy in the prevention and management of comorbidities which include hyperlipidaemia, diabetes, hypertension, chronic kidney disease and osteoporosis.
- Best practice, current clinical care guidelines and emerging evidence and research with respect to the nutritional management of PLHIV.
- The range of the psychosocial problems and HIV-related neurological disorders frequently encountered by PLHIV.
- Is aware of common herbal remedies used by PLHIV and their possible interactions with HIV specific medications and nutrient absorption.
- Understands HIV biochemistry, including CD4 count and viral load.

Skills

- Ability to undertake an appropriate and tailored assessment of an individual including consideration of nutrition-related side effects of HIV and treatment, social situation, medications and anthropometry, blood results, food security, psychosocial needs and other relevant assessments.
- Educate clients and their caregivers on the role of nutrition and diet in restoration and maintenance of health.
- Effectively communicate complex information to a range of people relating to the nutritional management of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in a variety of settings.
- Ability to teach the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to plan, manage, select, prepare and eat food to meet nutritional needs of people living with HIV.

- Ability to address barriers to change for PLHIV (stigma, discrimination, depression, lack of social support) when promoting diet and lifestyle changes.

Activities entry level APDs would conduct

- Provide support for maintenance and recovery of the immune function through planning and implementation of individualised medical nutrition therapy.
- Assist in developing strategies to manage nutrition-related side effects of disease and medications such as lipodystrophy, dyslipidaemia, insulin resistance and diabetes, hypertension, chronic kidney disease, osteoporosis, anaemia, anorexia, and gastrointestinal symptoms.
- Provide education for clients and carers on the potential impact of drug-nutrient interactions on nutritional status with antiretroviral therapy (ART), other medications, complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies, supplemental nutrients, herbs, and other therapies
- Support medical treatment of HIV by promoting adherence to treatment and compliance with regular clinic visits
- Maintain familiarity with community and other programs available to clients for referral in cases of social, economic, and psychological needs
- Remain knowledgeable of issues pertaining to privacy and confidentiality when providing nutritional care and providing care in an equitable and non-judgmental fashion

Activities APDs working at a higher level would conduct

- Audit, service development and research relating to HIV nutrition to inform clinical practice
- Strategic planning especially in line with HIV strategy and blood borne virus (BBV) strategies; in partnership with HIV health and non-health agencies.
- HIV advocacy and capacity building across both public and private healthcare departments.
- Case management and care coordination.

For more, download the full role statement. The full statement includes a list of document references.

Get in touch

If you have questions about this role statement, contact us at policy@dietitiansaustralia.org.au

The role of an Accredited Practising Dietitian

Our role statements describe the skills and knowledge of an APD working in an area of practice.

Seeing a dietitian in Australia

Dietitians treat a range of health conditions. They understand how nutrition affects the body and will give you expert nutrition and dietary advice.